

MAC News

The Newsletter of the Michigan Assessment Consortium



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Overview of MAC Activity

The school year is half over, but several activities for the Michigan Assessment Consortium – the MAC for short – are being planned. Two to three assessment development projects are under consideration and professional development programs are being offered to educators statewide.

There are opportunities for educators to get involved – to view the past programs that have been presented, to plan on participating in the upcoming programs, to get involved in the

assessment development projects on the drawing board, and more generally, help plan future activities.

At the current time, there are two committees that do the work of the MAC – one for assessment development and one for professional development. Each could use your help. Please see the list of MAC Board shown on page 3 of this newsletter to contact any Board member to get involved in the MAC – your organization to improve the use of assessments.

Upcoming Professional Development

One additional major professional development activity will still take place this year. The date for this activity is as follows:

- April 23, 2009, 9 – 11 am – Wayne RESA Margaret Heritage will speak on "Learning Progressions" Margaret, who is the assistant director for professional development at UCLA/CRESST, will speak on the importance of learning progressions in the formative assessment process.

Ideally, a learning progression is a logical sequence of instruction that may occur over one or more school years that leads students to accomplish something of significance. For formative assessment to be effective it must be linked to learning progressions that are clear. They can also help teachers locate students' current learning status on their way toward achieving a standard.

As in the past, the session will be brought to the state in-person and via videoconference, permitting educators unable to attend in person to do so "virtually." The session will be viewed live at www.mistreamnet.com.

Educators who are able to attend in person will have the added opportunity of participating in a question-and-answer session that will follow the presentation.

To receive more information about each of these activities, or those of the MAC, make sure that your name and e-mail address is on the official MAC mailing list. To add your name (or that of a colleague) to the list, please e-mail your contact information to: youngk1@michigan.gov. This will assure that you are kept informed about upcoming programs and events.

*Excellent-quality
professional
development
programs are
available online.*

MAC PD Programs Still Available

Although two of the three professional development programs for the 2008-09 school year have already occurred, it is not too late to view them. These (and future programs) are archived and available online 24-7 for viewing. These include these programs:

1 - "Creating a Balanced Assessment System for Student Success: A Conversation with Dr. Rick Stiggins" (air date March 7, 2008). Dr. Stiggins addressed the importance of a balanced assessment system and the roles of teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the assessment process.

2 - "7 Actions - Assessment for Learning, the Achievement Gap & Effective Schools" (air date October 8, 2008). Dr. Stiggins shared seven specific actions that tackle the role of assessment in serving the learning needs of students with multiple issues.

3 - "The Connection Between Motivation, Learning Theory and Our Assessment Practice" (air date January 28, 2009) Dr. Carol Commodore shared ideas about how good quality assessments can serve to motivate students' learning, which in turn can improve their achievement.

To view these sessions, go to www.mistreamnet.com, click on "Video On Demand."

Assessment Development Plans

The MAC assessment committee continues to plan potential assessment development projects in these areas:

- interim benchmark assessments in social studies, based on the curricula and instructional models developed by the Michigan Citizenship Collaborative Curriculum (MC3);
- CTE secondary technical skills summative assessments for CTE completers;
- assessment models in the arts. See page 4 for more information.

Each of these is an area where

ISDs/RESAs could work together on the assessments needed.

If approved, these projects will be carried out collaboratively within the state, using local and intermediate educators and others to create the needed assessments. The goal of this assessment development work is to create needed assessments that are of higher quality, produced at lower cost than what any one district could produce. The assessment committee is scheduled to continue its exploration of these and other projects at its next meeting.

MAC News

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to educators interested in improved student assessment and achievement. *MAC News* is published quarterly to keep you apprised of the activities of the MAC.

As this newsletter points out,

there are planned activities in both professional and assessment development. These are ways that you can be a part of this new effort to collaboratively improve the student assessments being used and developed. Let one of us know of your interest in getting involved!

MAC Board of Directors

The following individuals have agreed to serve as initial members of the MAC Board this school year. This year, organizational procedures will be developed to determine how Board members and officers will be selected. This is the current list of Board members:

President: Kathy Dewsbury-White, Ingham ISD

Secretary: Ed Roeber, MSU

Treasurer: Kim Young, Ionia County ISD

Board Members:

Judy Backes, Macomb ISD

Robby Cramer, MSTA

Bruce Fay, Wayne RESA

Karen Mlcek, Wexford-Missaukee ISD

Joseph Martineau, MDE OEAA

Olga Moir, MASCD

Dodie Raycraft, St. Joseph County ISD

Rochelle Rubin, MSTA

Interim Director, MDE OSI

Mike Yocum, Oakland ISD

Please feel free to contact any of the Board members regarding the MAC, including your interest in being involved in MAC activities, ideas for new projects, and so forth. Persons interested in getting involved are welcome to join either the assessment or professional development committees. Volunteers are always welcome!

"Persons interested in getting involved in the activities of the MAC are more than welcome to join in!"

MAC Vision for Michigan Educators

The MAC vision for assessment in Michigan includes the following:

Formative assessment and a balanced assessment system are valued components of Michigan education.

All Michigan educators understand and implement a system of coherent curriculum, balanced assessment and effective instruction.

A network of assessment coaches and partners function effectively to support the implementation of sound balanced assessment practices.

All teachers and administrators graduating from Michigan institutions of higher education are adequately prepared in

formative assessment practices and balanced assessment systems.

Michigan educational entities (e.g. districts, ISDs, educational organizations, universities, etc.) actively seek to collaborate with other entities on the development of assessment products and services.

Information on assessment products and services is readily available, in an organized manner, to Michigan educators.

These are the guiding principles that will direct the work of the MAC. Members are invited to comment on this visionary statement. Please send comments to:

Kathy Dewsbury-White at the following address: KDWhite@inghamisd.org

MDE/MAC PD Work on Balanced Assessment

The initial cohorts of 30 coaches and approximately 200 K-12 Michigan educators completed their foundational training over the past two months. Teams were provided professional development and supporting materials and resources to begin deepening their understanding of the formative assessment process.

Over the next several months, teams will meet regularly facilitated by their site-based coach. Each month will have a theme to guide their learning. For example, the January theme centered on "Feedback for Learning." Feedback for Learning is one of the most effective ways to motivate students to improve. Feedback for Learning provides students with specific information as to the strengths and weaknesses of their work in relation to specific target(s) that are aligned with the standards. What makes it so powerful is students are given the opportunity to use the

information provided to improve their work.

Learning teams were provided articles, research and materials to support their understanding and implementation of Feedback for Learning. Team members then share their learning and practice with their learning team and discuss the implications and considerations of their classroom practice.

Communication on a regular basis is an important component of the project. Teams and coaches have access to a user-friendly website for resources, information, and announcements about professional learning teams and formative assessment. Coaches have ongoing communication with OEAA staff and the professional development provider, Measured Progress to support their work with teams and to adjust to the needs of coaches and their teams. Future themes include: self-assessment and using assessment to adjust instruction.

MAC News

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*Improving
student learning
and achievement
through
coherent
curriculum,
balanced
assessment and
effective
instruction*

Arts Educators Seeks Your Input

A group of arts educators met on February 18 and developed four potential areas of collaborative work. Now, they are asking whether you would like to work on any of these priorities with them.

1. Create/refine a mechanism, perhaps a rubric, for local districts to use to determine which high school courses count for the Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts credit.
2. Define what a student needs to do at the high school level in order to earn the credit. This should go beyond the content expectations to descriptions of the competencies that students should demonstrate and the mechanisms they should use to do so.
3. Develop grade level content expectations for the dance, music, theater and visual arts at the elementary and middle school levels.
4. Define the middle school arts experiences that will help prepare students to earn the credit in high school and not forget what they have learned in elementary school.

If you or your district is interested in helping define these (or other activities) in the arts, please contact Ana Cardona, MDE Consultant for Arts Education at CardonaA@michigan.gov or (517) 335-0466 or Ed Roeber, MSU College of Education at roeber@msu.edu or (517) 432-0427. Arts educators and non-arts educators are welcome to participate in one or more of these activities. Please share this information with colleagues who might be interested.